

The Children.

BY J. H. WORST.

What shall be done with the dimpled darlings ; the little rosy cherubs that enliven mansion and cottage alike with their ripples of laughter and innocent prattle. After awhile they will grow larger and more practical, and something ought to be done with them. They may be ornamental, but they can also be made useful if properly managed.

Boys and girls are the life and joy of the present, and the hope of the future. Like almost every creature, they will be largely what circumstances and training make them, although occasionally one will rise above his circumstances and shame his whole ancestry by his towering genius.

Every boy and girl is endowed with certain traits of character and predominating faculties that fits him or her to fill some special calling in life better than any other. The school system that herds them all together and drives them through a certain cleft in the mountain of knowledge, prepares but few for a successful career. Parents and teachers are both at fault. A code of training, as arbitrary as senseless, disarranges nature's plan and often blights the child's whole life by dwarfing its predominating faculties for the sake of adhering to a system that treats ten thousand diverse entreties as though they were a unit. As well prescribe hay for every species of fowl and animal as a wholesome diet. Almost any man knows better than to harness his fourteen hundred pound Clydesdale to the sulky, and his nine hundred pound Hambleton to the lumber wagon, yet the same man will manifest less judgment in harnessing his boys and girls to the car of fortune. If children only did receive the study and judgment that is bestowed upon horses, cows and hogs, the world would be vastly better.

Too many children are raised solely for the work they can perform. All the periodicals the family takes relate to farming and stock-raising, and the study centers chiefly upon the price of stock and grain, butter and eggs. The thought never enters father's or mother's mind, what will Jacob, John or Mary succeed best in life at, and what little sacrifices should we make, and what encouragements should we offer that they may be properly equipped to lead a happy, useful and successful life. No, but on the other hand their resources are sapped until their twenty-first birthday to increase the acreage of the homestead, then they may go unfitted into life, though often broken in health. No wonder so many boys long for their majority to escape the family artillery—the jaw and strap. But even where the family whip does not crack too severely, and where home is comparatively pleasant, there is too little practical training. John may be, as the saying goes, cut out for a farmer, Jacob for a merchant, and Henry for a mechanic. These traits, if strongly marked, will show themselves. To force them all into agricultural pursuits, or to place John behind the counter and Jacob behind the forge would be criminal. Why not allow them to follow such callings as are congenial to their tastes and faculties? Ah! why even encourage it, and give them an opportunity to fit themselves for their respective callings, intellectually and practically, while they are yet in their minority.

You can't afford it?

Is not the possible fifty years of their life dependent upon their happiness and skill more to them than three or four years of their minority are to you? It will make but little difference either way to you, but it is a whole life of weal or woe to them. Don't blame that shiftless man that drags out a miserable existence renting land here and there, until you know his history. He might have ranked high in mechanics, or have been an ornament at the bar, or an adept in the healing art had his parents acted less arbitrarily. True, there are exceptions to all rules, but it may be set down as the general axiom that the successful men in life are those that fortunately followed the business congenial to their qualifications. Some had to wriggle around quite awhile before they got on the right road to fortune but struck it at last. Others never strike it and are left, totally and irretrievably left, by the car of progress and never succeed.

Would A. T. Stewart have succeeded at blacksmithing? Would Horace Greeley have honored the saddler's bench?

All children should be taught to work. All children should be trained with a view to their own future as well as to the present help on the farm or in the store or shop. How often do we hear the remark at the funeral of a young man, "Oh, what a loss; and just now when he could begin to do a man's work! How he will be missed! Ah! yes. Not a word about love or the tender ties of nature. No, but he is missed too much as the family horse is missed when death ends that animal's existence. There is no excuse for marring a youth's future life for even the contingency of a "widow's son." Better for her a thousand times to shift a few years as she would without him, for the sake of a contented home for life, with a happy and prosperous son, than to share a dolt's hard-earned poverty. Nature makes but few dolts. They are the product of misguided influences that cover up a man's "royal faith," or by sheer force drives him from it.

Does it affect a man's religious nature?

Ah, yes, that it does. No man can be happy when he knows he has missed the train that has carried him to his goal, and without happiness religion is an absent quantity. No man can curse fate and worship God at once.

Do you see that man with his wife and children around him? Well, he is happy. Nothing forced or strained about him. He loves his business, is prosperous and happy. He enjoys his religion. But that other man, with the contracted, furrowed brow, is unhappy. He is like a caged bird fretting for freedom. Nature made him with the genius that can only shine at the bar. His father made him a farmer. He is poor, loathes his business, and dreams o'er and o'er, "it might have been." His soul is too agitated to enjoy a sermon or live a natural Christian life. Duty, to him, would be but pleasure to the other gentleman.

Heaven on the Shelf.

As John Elliot was once calling on a merchant, he saw in his counting room, ledgers and account books on the table, while some religious and devotional works were laid up on the shelf, and remarked to his friend:

"Sir, here is earth on the table, and heaven on the shelf. Pray do not think so much of the table as to altogether forget the shelf."

We are too prone to put heaven on the shelf, and so busy ourselves with this world that we forget the next. But the things that are seen are temporal; and how soon they must all pass away. A little while and every earthly delight and possession will have passed forever beyond our reach: and there will be nothing left for us except the unseen and eternal.

Let us then occupy ourselves most with the things that are enduring. Let us lay up our treasures where they cannot be stolen or destroyed; and let us seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, knowing that all needed things will be added unto us.—THE CHRISTIAN.

Preaching to Three People.

It is not easy to tell by outward circumstances what will be the ultimate results of labor in the cause of Christ. The efforts which we esteem least may be most signally blessed, and when circumstances may appear most forbidding, blessings may most abound.

A Christian friend informed us that a number of years ago, an earnest preacher, named John Holmes had an appointment to preach one evening at Castle Bar in Ireland. On arriving at the place he found a congregation of three, to whom, not daunted nor discouraged, he preached the words of everlasting life, doing his work for God in faith and zeal. One of the persons present was converted; a young man who grew in grace, and was subsequently called to the ministry of God, and greatly used of the Lord in his service. It was a good hour's work when John Holmes preached the gospel of Christ to a congregation of three at Castle Bar. One soul saved is worth a life of labor, and especially when that soul, thus saved, becomes a soul-winner, and gathers others to the ark of God, as has that Castle Bar convert, since known throughout the world as William Arthur, author of "The Tongue of Fire."—SEL.

Can We See?

BY F. E. MATTICK.

A Syrian king sent troops to arrest the Prophet Elisha; they surrounded the village where the prophet abode. He had but one servant for defense. "Alas, my master," inquired the servant, "what can we do?" The prophet saw that instant what his servant could not see. Once before he had seen what fifty witnesses, watching over the river, could not see: the translation of Elijah. "Fear not," said Elisha, "for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." To the natural eye the dawn of that morning disclosed nothing save an immense Syrian army, and Elisha prayed, "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes." A new sense or faculty was conferred, the young man saw a new order of intelligence. They were there before, but were previously invisible. Ascend the Mount of Transfiguration: certain forms appeared there which bodied forth the fullness of life; these were not transient visitors to the earth, but natural senses could not see them. Again, the case of Stephen, while receiving blows from his murderers, saw, and the eternal gates seemed to open. It was really the opening of his eyes upon the immortal life. The same was true of Paul. Christ did not then descend from beyond the stars; He is ever present and omnipresent; He came from a sphere above the natural, but within the range of immortality. Is a thing unreasonable because invisible? Must every thing become the object of sight and touch, before we can be certain of its existence? What is the substance of man's existence? Can we tell, or how do we continue to live when we are asleep? Do we know, or is the world annihilated of a dark night? Why not? What a narrow view is this, which depends upon keeping the soul within hailing distance of the earth, and because we cannot tell where the disembodied soul exists shall we deny its existence? Are we not living a life of faith, without which we cannot please God; and when the mists of natural life have gathered over us, can we not through the gospel, see the immortal? "For now we see through a glass dimly, but then face to face; and now we know in part, but then we shall know as we are known."—Austin, W. Va.

Converted by His Own Preaching.

French Protestants have been lamenting the loss of several valuable pastors; among them is M. Jeanmaire of the confession of Augsburg, and the story of his singular conversion is recalled: At the time of its occurrence he was a preceptor in the house of Hohenlohe, and was a rationalist in his views. On a certain occasion he was invited by a pastor to supply for him. He declined saying: "How can I preach what I do not believe?"

"What! do not believe in God?"

"Yes, I do that."

"And surely you believe that we should love Him?"

"Doubtless."

"Well, then, preach on the words of Jesus: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and strength.'"

"I will try just to oblige you."

He thought over the words and made notes:

"First. We must love God, and the reason for it."

"Second. We must love him with all our powers, in every deed; nothing less could satisfy God."

"Third. But do we thus love God? No!"

"And then," said he, "without any previously formed plans, I was brought to add: 'We need a Saviour.' At that moment a new light broke upon my soul. I understood that I had not loved God; that I needed a Saviour; that Jesus was that Saviour; and I loved him and clung to him at once. On the morrow I preached the sermon, and the third head was the chief—the need of Jesus, and the necessity of trusting such a Saviour."—SEL.

Enjoy the blessings of this day, if God sends them, and the evils of it bear patiently and sweetly; for this day only is ours; we are dead to yesterday, and we are not yet born to to-morrow.—Anon.